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His universal and ardent interest in all flowering forms, as well as his extensive knowledge and the sympathetic communication of it were such as to enkindle in others a similar interest and zeal; and for the loss of men possessing this inspiring quality science will always grieve. As he was fond of referring to, and quoting the sayings of his great teacher, the lamented Dr. Torrey, no little of whose spirit and influence he caught and transmitted, so also will many of the younger members of the Club, to whom Dr. Torrey is personally unknown, find in the memory and example of Mr. Ruger a similar incentive and inspiration. A. B.

§ 335. **Trapa natans.**—A living specimen of this curious and interesting aquatic plant has been recently sent us by Dr. Allen, taken, we believe, by Dr. Paine from a pond near Concord, Mass. Prof. Sargent states that it is getting common in the ponds and stagnant waters about Cambridge, and threatens to become a nuisance. As it has not until recently been found in English or American waters, it is not described in any of the English or American manuals, and some account of it may be found useful.

The plant is common in the warm and temperate parts of Europe and Asia. It is common in the ponds about Versailles, but is said never to have been naturalized in England. By European botanists it has been usually classed with the Onagraceae. Its affinity, however, is rather with the Halorageae, from which it differs chiefly in its hemispherical stigma and ex-albumninous embryo. In the General Botany of Le Maout and De Caisne the Trapeae are made a distinct order, with but a single genus, Trapa ; and the species *natans* is there figured with the fulness and beauty of anatomical detail which characterize that work.

" The name of ' Trapa,' says Paxton, is abridged from *calcitrapa*, the Latin name of an instrument called caltrop, (the Roman tribulus) furnished with four spines, formerly used in war to impede the progress of cavalry, the fruit of some of the species of Trapa being furnished with four spines. The same author mentions four species, *bicornis*, *bispinosa*, *quadrispinosa* and *natans ;* all, except the last, found only in China and the East Indies. The large seeds of T. *bispinosa* are sweet and edible : they form an extensive article of cultivation. In Cashmere and other parts of the East they are common food and known under the name of Singhara nuts.

Trapa natans roots in the mud of stagnant or slow waters. The submerged stem rises to the surface, and of course varies in length with the depth of the water ; the specimen sent us was about four feet long, thickly beset with leaves mostly opposite, pectinately dissected, and having the appearance of rootlets. The stem ends at the surface of the water, where it sends forth a thick and spreading rosette of leaves, which is often a foot in diameter, floating just above the surface. The leaves have stout, spongy petioles from two to six inches long, with the blade coriaceous and rhomboidal, or lozenge-shaped, from a half inch to an inch and a half long, with a breadth somewhat greater, the base entire, the upper edges coarsely dentate, smooth and shining above and strongly ribbed beneath. A conspicuous feature, sufficient to identify the plant at a glance, is the inflation at the middle of each petiole, forming a sort of elliptical bladder, which on the larger leaves is an inch long by half an inch in diameter. The bladders are entirely closed, not hollow, but of the same cellular, spongy texture as the petiole, and we suppose their purpose must be to assist in sustaining above the water the somewhat heavy clustered foliage. They form in fact a cordon of *life-preservers* about the central flowering parts.

The flowers (June–July) are solitary, short-peduncled, axillary, small and white; petals, calyx lobes and stamens, four, the latter inserted with the petals on a disk crowning the ovary; stigma, one, capitate; ovary semi-inferior, embraced by the adnate calyx tube, which rapidly enlarges in fruit to a turbinate, bony nut, nearly two inches long, one-celled and one-seeded from arrest; and from the calyx lobes are developed four sharp, spreading horns or spines, somewhat recurved, and often one-third of an inch long. The seed is mealy and edible, resembling the chestnut.

From the nut the plant is in Germany popularly called Schwimmende Wassernuss—Swimming Water-nut—which is so apt that it might well bear here the same popular name, rather than that of the "European Water Caltrop" by which it has been sometimes called. However introduced, it bids fair to stay, and its gradual extension southwards may be looked for. A. B.

§ 336. **Gray's Botanical Text Book.**—In our notice of this work in the June No. there were some obvious typographical errors, p. 318, l. 4, "Diplosteminous" for Diplostemonous; p. 319, about the middle "Brown" for Braun; and on p. 320, last line but one of third paragraph, "it is entitled" where "it" should be omitted, and also the comma after "views," in the next paragraph but one; and in the final line for "levaes" read leaves. But the chief error was the omission of some words in a sentence near the beginning of page 318. The sentence should read: In the doctrine of the flower, Chap. VI., it is stated that "extended observation leads to the conclusion that the typical flower in nature has two series of stamens, as it has two series in the perianth," or is *Diplostemonous*, the stamen circles alternating respectively with calyx and corolla.

The more we read this admirable work, the more we are impressed with its depth and its clearness. We embrace this opportunity to add the following exposition of the place of species in classification, as, perhaps, a necessary complement to our notice.

"Species is taken as the unit in zoological and botanical classification." . . . "The aim of systematic natural history is to express their [species] relationship to each other. The whole ground in nature for the classification of species is the obvious fact that species resemble or differ from each other unequally and in extremely various degrees. If this were not so, if related species differed from one another by a constant quantity, so that, when arranged according to their resemblances, the first differed from the second about as much as the second from the third, and the third from the fourth, and so on,—or if the species blended as do the colors of the rainbow,